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NEURODEVELOPMENTAL TEAM

ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP ORAL SENSORY PROCESSING



The following are a list of activities and strategies that can be used to assist the child develop their oral system. The use of the following strategies should reduce the need for chewing on inappropriate/inedible items i.e. clothes, skin, books etc.

- ✚ Using electric/battery operated toothbrushes instead of manual provided additional sensory feedback to the mouth.
- ✚ If the child tolerates it wiping the face with a wet/cold terry towel facecloth can help to raise awareness of the mouth area. The child should be encouraged to do this for themselves if possible. This could be used prior to eating or at a time when the child is particularly prone to chewing
- ✚ Providing opportunities to chew on hard crunchy food e.g. apples, carrot sticks, fruit bars, dried fruit (dried mango is particularly good for chewing on) wine gums that have been placed in the fridge can help develop oral feedback as they are chewy and cold. (If you suspect your child has swallowing difficulties or is at risk of choking, please refrain from giving your child these foods and seek advice from your child's Doctor or Paediatrician).
- ✚ Sucking from sports bottles or a drinking straw can also assist in developing sensory processing from the oral sensory system. Sucking colder, thicker liquids such as milkshakes and using twisted/crazy straws can provide more feedback
- ✚ If tolerable place your index finger above the upper lip and move finger from the middle to the corners of the mouth. Do the same for the lower lip to increase awareness. Demonstrate and have the child imitate if possible.
- ✚ If possible encourage the child to place his index finger on his upper teeth and push upwards and on his lower teeth and push downwards. This can be demonstrated by Adult but it is not recommended that anybody else carries out this activity due to risk of biting.
- ✚ Massage the face gently around the mouth area; again encourage the child to imitate these using two hands if possible.
- ✚ Blowing bubbles, whistles, blow football, blow pens etc can help to wake up the receptors in the mouth. The child should be supplied with a selection of these for use. **These should be used with supervision**
- ✚ Sucking on an ice lolly

-  Use of towelling wristbands can stop the child from chewing on the sleeves of their clothes or on their skin. These can also be useful for the child who dribbles as they can be encouraged to wipe their own chins.
-  There are a number of specialist items available that are specially designed for chewing. These include “Chewy Tubes”, “Chewelery (chewable jewellery)”, “ChewEase” pencil toppers and other products. These should not just be given to the child but used as part of a sensory programme i.e. provided at certain times of the day when the child needs to chew. Then taken away while the child completes a task. **They should always be used with supervision.**

The above items are available online and can be accessed by typing the name into the search engine. Please contact the department if you would like further information on the use of these items or if you are unable to access them.

N.B. Your Child should be supervised when carrying out any aspects of the above

If you suspect your child has swallowing difficulties or is at risk of choking, please seek advice from your child's Doctor or Paediatrician.